Borrowing of Art Sculptures by the Director General of National Museum

*263. DR. YELAMANCHILI SIVAJI: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) what time is likely to be taken by the Director General, National Museum, New Delhi to return the sculptures loaned by the Archaeological Survey of India, New Delhi between 1980 to 1984 to Ancient Sculptures of India exhibition in Japan 1984, Festival of India in USA and other exhibition abroad;

(b) what are the details of archaeological objects taken from various museum in Andhra Pradesh; whether it is a fact that some rare sculpture like "YAKSHI" have been damaged; what is the position of their safety and who are responsible for the damage caused to them;

(c) what precautionary measures were taken for their safety in transportation, exhibition etc., whether the services of the personnel of the departments concerned were utilised; if so, what is the number of personnel deputed from National Museum, New Delhi and Archaeological Survey of India to escort the sculptures; and

(d) whether it is a fact that some sculptures which have been returned from abroad are still lying in Delhi without being handed over to their parent institutions; if so, what are the details thereof and reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENTS OF EDUCATION AND CULTURE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI L. P. SHAHI): (a) to (d) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) The Director General, National Museum, New Delhi has informed that all the sculptures, except two bronzes, have been returned to the Archaeological Survey of India. These two art objects will also be returned shortly.

(b) to (d) The details of six Archaeological objects taken from museums of Andhra Pradesh may be seen in the attached Annexure. (*See* below). All these art objects have been retruned and no sculpture including "YAKSHI", (Amravati) has suffered any new damage.

However, "Didarganj Yakshi" of Patna Museum, Patna (Bihar) has suffered a slight damage during its return journey from USA to India. As the damage had probably occured due to jerks etc. during transportation, no person can be held responsible for this. The question of compensation of the mino-damage suffered by it is still being considered in consultation with State Government of Bihar, and so the art object has not been returned to Patna Museum so far. All the other sculptures have been returned.

Maximum precautions are taken in the most modern methods of packing, unpacking and transportation of art objects. All objects are insured on a wall-to-wall basis. A courier invariably accompanies a consignment of exhibits. 37 persons belonging to National Museum and Archaeological Survey of India escorted exhibits while these were sent to, and brought back from various exhibitions organised by National Museum.

Annexure

List of Art Objects Borrowed by the National Museum from the various Museums in Andhra Pradesh for Festivals

A. Amravathi Site Museum

1. Yakshi, Satavahana, 2nd cent. B.C.

Archaeological Museum, Amravathi, Acc. No. 48.

2. Bodhistava, Satavahana, 2nd cent. B.C. Archaeologiacl Museum Amravathi, Acc.No.313|303.1

B. Nagarjunakonda Site Museum

1. Stupa slab, Ikshavaku, 3rd cent. A.D. Archaeological Museum. Nagarjunakonda, Acc. No. 71.

2. Scenes from the Buddha's Life, Ikshvaku. 3rd cent. A.D. Archaeological Museum Nagarjunakonda, Acc. No. 52.

3. Screen panel, Ikshvaku, 3rd cent. A.D. Achaeological Museum, Nagar, junakonda, Acc. No. 129.

4. Torso of Standing Buddha, Iksvaku, 3rd cent. A.D. Achacological Museum, Nagarjunakonda, Acc. No. 39.

DR. YELAMANCHILI SIVAJI: Sir, as per the answer of the hon. Minister the Government appears to be not sure of itself. It has been stated that the Director-General, National Museum, New Delhi, has informed, and it has been stated that all the sculptures have been returned except two bronzes. What are those bronzes?

Secondly, the usual practice is not to take these sculptures and bronzes from the country to outside. Instead, why should the Government not take a policy decision to take some fibreglass images instead of these sculptures to save them?

It has been stated that slight damage has been caused. The value of the damage cannot be measured in terms of mortar and cement. It is an irreparable damage as far as the sculptures are concerned. They belong to even the second century B.C. etc. So, the damage cannot be measured. So, I would like to know who estimates the loss and the damage. Who is the surveyor? I would also like to know whether these are insured. If so, with what company and what is the amount of the premium and what is the total amount insured? It is also stated that....

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI P. SHIV SHANKER): It is an endless supplementary.

DR. YELAMACHILE SIVAJI: No, it is in parts (a), (b), (c) and)d) It belongs to our State-Amravathi and Nagarjunakonda.

SHRI P. SHIV SHANKER: So far as Amravathi and Nagarjunakonda are concerned, all the items have been returned. There is nothing. Not a single damage has taken place.

DR. YELAMANCHILI SIVAJI: It is not a fact.

MR. CHAIRMAN: If the Minister says they have been returned, you have to take it that they have been returned.

DR. YELAMANCHILI SIVAJI: It is stated some 37 persons have been selected to escourt these sculptures. Who are these 37 persons. How are they selected? Instead of requisitioning from the National Museum, and the Archaeological Survey of India, why can't the people from the parent museum to which these sculptures belong be requisitioned so that they may be more careful in guarding them they will also be more concerned regarding their own sculptures.

SHRI L. P. SHAHI: One of the two item which have not been returned so far is abronze bull of Kalibangam, Rajasthan. It is at present placed in Purana Qila Museum, New Delni. The other is a bronze chariot with a charioteer belonging to the Dhiamabad

Site Museum of the Archaeological Survey of India in Maharashtra. These two were supposed to be taken to an exhibition in Yugoslavia, but later on when the Committee sat for selecting the items for being exhibited in Yugoslavia, they left these items. Now, these two will be returned to the parent organisations by the National Museum. That is about the two.

So far as the Committee is concerned and as to how these are selected. I would like to inform the hon. Member that there are three committees constituted for this purpose. Committee No. (1) is a Committee of Experts which looks into these items and marks these into two categories—category (a) and category (aa). The double (a) categories are such items which are not taken out of the country. Category (a) items are items which are reviewed on occasions before being taken out of the country. Then there is another committee meant for conservation of these items. That Committee also occasionally sits and looks into the fragileness of the items and then recommends whether these are in a position to be shifted or not. Then the third committee is the Screening and Evaluation Committee. That sits after looking into the report of the first and the third Committee. Then that Committee decides whether a particular item is fit to be taken out for exhibition outside or not.

Then there is a supplementary put by the member which relates to the members of the committee. If you permit me I can read out the names.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You place the list of names on the Table of the House.

SHRI L. P. SHAHI: I place the list on the Table of the House.

DR. YELAMANCHILI SIVAJI: My main supplementaries have not been answered. Why does not the Government take a policy decision to exhibit fibre-glass images instead of the original objects to save them from being damaged.

SHRI L. P. SHAHI: I would like to state for the benefit of the House and for the information of the Member that the process of selecting images is such that the country where the exhibition is going to take place, their representatives also come and visit different museums. They point out that they would like to have those particular images. Thereafter the Indian Committee decide whether these images are in a position to be sent outside or not. So the question of sending out fibre glass images does not arise in the present situation.

DR. YELAMANCHILI SIVAJI: Regarding insurance of the object, he has not answered. I want to know for how much amount it has been insured.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Your question is....

DR. YELAMANCHILI SIVAJI: Sir, in the first supplementary itself, I have asked about the insurance.

MR. CHAIRMAN: He has already said that it has been insured.

DR. YELAMANCHILI SIVAJI: For how much amount it has been insured?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Then put another question... (*Interruptions*)... No, no, this does not arise as a supplementary.

DR. YELAMANCHILI SIVAJI: I am putting my second supplementary. The Minister has stated in his reply that the sculpture objects have been returned to Amravati of Guntur District. But my information is that they did not reach Amravati so far. So my question is when they have been despatched? At what time and on what date they have been despatched?

श्री रामापति : अमरावती नहीं पहुंचे हैं, कब तक पहुंचेंगे, यह बताइये ।

श्री एल०पी० साही : यहां से भज दिए गए हैं, पहुंच जाएंगे ।

DR. YELAMANCHILI SIVAJI: Through what mode of transport it was sent?

SHRI P. SHIV SHANKER: After it goes, it will be in the possession of Mr. Sivaji.

DR. YELAMANCHILI SIVAJI: Let the hon. Minister along with the External Affairs Minister visit Amravati and see....

SHRI JAGESH DESAI: These art objects belong to Maharashtra or Andhra Pradesh?

DR. YELAMANCHILI SIVAJI: They are very much from Andhra Pradesh.

SHRI P. SHIV SHANKER: Our information is that, it has reached the destination.

श्री अजीत जोगी : मान्यवर, मैं यह जानना चाहता हूं कि जिस तरह से फैस्टिवल आफ इंडिया विदेशों में होते हैं और वहां हमारी बहुमूल्य पुरातत्व की मूर्तियां भेजी जाती हैं, उसी तरह से विदेशों के फैस्टिवल भी भारत में होते हैं, तो क्या जब भारत में उनके फैस्टिवल्स होते हैं तब इसी तरह की बहुमूल्य पुरातत्व मूर्तियां वहां भेजी जाती हैं और अगर नहीं भेजी जाती हैं तो हमारे लिए क्या यह आवश्यक है कि ऐसी बहुमूल्य और अमूल्य मूर्तियां बाहर भेजें और आने जाने में वे टूट जाएं या भंग हो जाएं ? क्या इस पर मंत्री जी प्रकाश डालेंगे ?

श्री एल०पी० साही : महोदय, विदेशों से भी आर्ट्स आब्जेक्ट्स हिन्दुस्तान में आए हैं और उनका ऐग्जिबिशन हुआ है, जैसे ब्रिटेन से हेनरी मूर के 8 आब्जेक्ट्स हिन्दुस्तान में आए थे और उनका ऐग्जिबिशन बहुत पापुलर हुआ था । सवाल यह उठता है कि हमारी पुरानी संस्कृति है, पुरानी सभ्यता है, हम जिस टीले को खोदते हैं उससे पुरानी मूर्तियां निकलती हैं । तो इतनी मूर्तियां दूसरों के पास अवेलेबल नहीं हैं जितनी हमारे पास हैं ।

श्री अजीत जोगी : हमारे पास ज्यादा हैं तो इसका मतलब यह नहीं है कि हम उनको तोड़ दें । हमारी बहुमूल्य धरोहर है तो इसका मतलब यह नहीं है कि हम उसके साथ खिलवाड़ करें ।

श्री एल०पी० साही : अभी आपने देखा होगा यू०एस०एस०आर० और फ्रांस का ऐग्जिबिशन हुआ तो उनके भी ओरिजनल आब्जक्ट आए है, उनकी भी बहुमूल्य वस्तुएं हमारे यहां आई हैं और लोगों ने उनको देखा है ।

श्री अजीत जोगी : उनकी सामान्य चीजें आती है ।

SHRI P. SHIV SHANKER: Even from the countries where we have been haring the festivals, we have been getting their priceless art objects. It is not as though that uglier ones were coming. In fact, on one case, I am aware, I would not like to name the country, they have started bargaining with us that they would send the secondary articles which we refused and ultimately they have agreed that they will send only priceless art objects. Our people have gone there and selected the art objects and their Committee also accepted. It is at the highest level that this decision has taken place.

SHRI G. SWAMINATHAN: Mr. Chairman, Sir, in the statement it has been mentioned that one art object "Yakshi" from Patna Museum, Patna, Bihar has been damaged. A thorough discussion took place in the Parliament that such priceless art objects should not be sent abroad. The then Minister for Human Resource Development also informed us that he will see to it that no damage will occur to these priceless art objects.

Now, I find another object has been damaged and it has not been informed what is the period of the object and what is the loss that has happened to this object. Suppose, we take a decision to send it out and we are not able to receive it back without damage and if it is continuously done, then many of our art objects are lost. Why don't we make anybody accountable for it? Why don't you revise the policy in this matter.

SHRI L. P. SHAHI: Sir, it is a fact that the Patna 'Yakshi' which was sent out to U.S.A. last time in the Festival of India, has got a small damage on the left cheek, 1|10 inch.

SHRI G. SWAMINATHAN: Sir, that is a damage already done on the check. (*Interruptions*)...I won't say it is a small damage. According to the information which I have, it is a small chip going away from the cheek, damaging the whole object. That means the purity of the object has gone in the eyes of the connoisseurs of the art.

SHRI L. P. SHAHI: Sir, while I do not want to argue on the point that even a small damage can disfigure but I want to let it be known to the House and the hon. Members that the 'Yakshi' which is the subject matter of discussion just now, had already a left hand removed before it was found out from the dhobi ghat there. So, there is a very vital damage already existing before it was taken up.

MR. CHAIRMAN: When you are conscious that no further damage is done, then why do you argue about it?

SHRI L. P. SHAHI: Sir, there was a Committee. The committee sat and decided upon the insurance claim. The Bihar Government however is contesting the insurance claim and that has not been settled so far.

SHRI G. SWAMINATHAN: What is the period of that object?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shri V. Narayanasamy.

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: Mr. Chairman, Sir, the hon. Minister gave an elaborate reply but nothing concrete has come out. Sir, in para 3 of his reply it has been stated that the damage had probably occurred due to jerks etc. during transportation. The hon. Minister said that there are three committees. Out of these three Committees, one is for the purpose of categorising the art objects. The second one is for the purpose of consigning the art objects and the third Committee is meant for the evaluation of the reports of these two Committees. Sir, this art object 'Yakshi' which has been referred to by the hon. Minister, we are not referring to the question of insurance claim. It is nothing. It is a priceless object. Any small damage caused to the object will definitely cause a loss of crores and crores of rupees. We are not on that aspect at all. But why can't the damage done to the object be measured? It is a priceless object which has been damaged...

MR. CHAIRMAN: What is your question?

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: My question is, the Committee which has been formed for the purpose of finding out the art objects which have to be sent abroad, whether this fact did not occur to them that if a particular art object is taken out, damage would be caused. Nobody is held responsible for this. But the Committee said they have been categorising the art objects.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Come to your question.

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: I am coming, Sir. Therefore, I would like to know whether they have taken any action against the persons who have been members of the Committee. (*Interruptions*) Who should be held responsible for this lapse?

SHRI L. P. SHAHI: Sir, for the information of the hon. Member, I would like to say that the Yakshi has

now been kept and it is not to be sent out any further to any other country outside. So far as the Members of the Committee are concerned, the Committee consists of experts who sit and decide about the things.

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: Sir, this is the reply. (*Interruptions*)...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Damage is caused in transit. So, how can those who choose... (*Interruptions*)...

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: I seek your protection, Sir. When they know it fully well that if such an object is transported, damage will be caused, why was it allowed to be transported?

SHRI MOTURU HANUMANTHA RAO: Sir it is stated here that valuable sculptures are sent outside. And, however much care is taken, they are likely to be damaged as we have seen in practice. Such being the practice, why should we not give up the entire policy of sending them outside? We should not send them outside because they are invaluable things. They should be kept safely here.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Wil you consider stopping this practice in view of these damages?

SHRI P. SHIV SHANKER: Sir, may I make this submission? In all, 1882 objects were sent to various countries. It is only these two objects about which we have referrd which have suffered a very minor damage. In fact, this damage to the 'Yakshi' occured during the journey because of jerks. As my colleague has made the position clear, the insurance claim is being sorted out. But it is not possible... (*Interruptions*). One minute. Will you kindly hear? We have to rely on experts. Experts go into it. It is the experts who decide whether a particular object should be sent outside or not. I mean, it is none of my business to take a decision by myself. Or my colleague does not take any decision. The matter has to be left to the realm of experts and it is not possible for us to totally decide that we shall not send any object because it is a matter of cultural exchange between countries and there are agreements which we have entered into. I assure the House that unless experts themselves deicde to send them we shall not send them.

SHRI MOTURU HANUMANTHA RAO: Mr. Chairman, Sir,...

MR. CHAIRMAN: He has said that only if experts agree they will send. It is a question of cultural exchange, mutual exchange. This is his answer. You cannot put your answer into his mouth.

SHRI MOTURU HANUMANTHAI RAO: What I want to ask is,...

MR. CHAIRMAN: You want to know whether they will stop it. His answer is they will not.

SHRI MOTURU HANUMANTHA RAO: They will have to stop it as a matter of policy. The Government can take it as a policy and advise the experts accordingly.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Minister, you are not thinking of stopping it. Are you? (*Interruptions*).

SHRI B. SATYANARAYAN REDDY: What would be the policy of the Government?

MR. CHAIRMAN: They are not going to stop it.

SHRI SHIV SHANKER: I made the position clear. There are agreements of cultural exchanges. Unless hon. Members would like that there should be no cultural exchange, whatsoever, no agreement should be entered into as I said. So far as the objects are concerned, the Government has no intention to stop sending them. It is a matter for the experts to decide whether an object is in a position to be sent. This is the position which I explained. (*Interruptions*).

PROF. CHANDRESH P. THAKUR: Coming from the State of Bihar, I do not object to the fact that the Didarganj Yakshi of Patna Museum had been selected as a part of the contribution to the exhibition and the people of Bihar really feel a sense of pride that one of their pieces of art

was selected. But, at the same time, the very fact that it got damaged—whether the damage is minor or major—has definitely hurt the sentiments of that region. (*Interruptions*). Yes. It has hurt the sentiments of all of us. Now, I am on the issue of compensation. When we talk of compensation, is it the money value or the sentimental value that we are talking about? (*Interruptions*). How do you propose to assuage the hurt feelings of that region? I would like to know whether the Government would consider the following points. Point No. 1 is: Whatever amount of compensation that comes from the insurance claim should be only the minimum and not the total. In addition to that, will the Government of India consider a substantial amount to compensate for the damage which could be spent for the renovation and expansion of Patna Museum? That is one. Second, will the Government also consider the possibility of setting up a regional cultural centre which the Ministry of Culture is setting up in different parts of the country? In the first place there is a legitimate claim of Bihar to have this centre...

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, no; it does not arise. This is not a supplementary. I disallow it. Cultural centres do not come under this.

SHRI MURLIDHAR CHANDRAKANT BHANDRAE: It is relevant, Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You cannot put a national museum in cultural centres. How can you combine the two? You are an advocate.

PROF. CHANDRESH P. THAKUR : Finally, will the Government see that this piece of culture finally reaches Patna Museum?

SHRI L. P. SHAHI: There is no intention on the part of the Government not to return it to Patna Museum It has to return to Patna Museum. There are no two opinions about it. We are waiting for the compensation to be settled.

MR. CHAIRMAN: And you will see that it is returned there at the earliest.

SHRI A. G. KULKARNI: Sir, I would like to know from the honourable Minister, when this reply was drafted, just as my friend.....

MR. CHAIRMAN: Put your supplementary.

SHRI A. G. KULKARNI: During Narasimha Rao's time, when he was the Minister of Human Resources, a grand debate took place in this House, I was present and Narasimha Rao was very sympathetic and he helped the Member with...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Shiv Shanker is also sympathetic.

SHRI A. G. KULKARNI: Shiv Shanker might be sympathetic but he has undermined the damage. Suppose the nose of a beautiful lady is cut. How can you assess the damage? Sir, you tell me as Chairman, when her nose is cut, will there be beauty any more in her? Whether the damage done to Didarganj Yakshi is minor or major, in terms of money it is zero. One has to be very careful. (Interruption)

MR. CHAIRMAN: He agrees with you.

SHRI A. G. KULKARNI: I would request the honourable Minister that these things cannot be compared. When a beautiful place like the nose of a lady is cut, the damage cannot be estimated. So also, for Didarganj Yakshi even if there is a little damage on the cheek it is a serious damage. It is a very important area...

SHRI ALADI ARUNA alias V. ARUNACHALAM: Oh! it is an important area.

SHRI SHANKER SINH VAGHELA: What is there to be so important? (Interruptions)

SHRI A. G. KULKARNI: The youngsters may make a joke of a cheek. I am an old person. I only want to say that this policy of sending such valuable artefacts outside has to be reviewed. Is the Government prepared for that?

MR. CHAIRMAN: He will take greater care hereatfer. Then Mr. Bhandare.

श्री अरविन्द गणेश कुलकर्णी: जवाब क्या हुआ ।

MR. CHAIRMAN: He wil take greater care when sending objects that such things do not happen and that only with great care such objects will be sent. And he agrees with you that at your age cheek becomes very important.

SHRI MURLIDHAR CHANDRAKANT BHANDARE: I am all in favour of these cultural exchanges between two countries...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Make it short. Not like a Supreme Court advocate...

SHRI MURLIDHAR CHANDRAKANT BHANDARE: But I am also of the firm opinion that these should not only be mutual but comparable. I want to know whether USA or Japan has given us anything comparable with what we have sent abroad because it is only one-way traffic. (*Interruption*) From USSR we could get best possible but not from USA and Japan. I would like to know from the honourable Minister what steps he is taking to see that these exchanges are comparable.

MR. CHAIRMAN: He will take all care... (*Interruptions*)...

SHRI L. P. SHAHI: Sir, we will take care... (*Interruptions*)...Sir, we will take care to see that whatever things come to India are also comparable. But, as you know, Sir the importance of an object of art differs from viewers to viewers.

SHRI MURLIDHAR CHANDRAKANT BHANDARE: No, no.

SHRI L. P. SHAHI: Otherwise it would not have been an object of art.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. Next Question. Question No. 264.

Resettlement of Chakma Refugees

*264. SHRI MUKHTIAR SINGH MALIK: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news item which appeared in the Indian Express dated the 7th November, 1988 to the effect that Chakma community has been facing uncertain future; and

(b) if so, whether any steps are being contemplated by Government for their resettlement; if not, what are the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI P. V. NARASIMHA RAO): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The refugees are Bangladeshi nationals. Therefore Government do not intend to take steps for their settlement in India. However, Government have been maintaining contact with the Bangladesh Government to persuade that Government to take the necessary steps to create conditions in the Chittagong Hill Tracts which would give the refugees the confidence to return to their homes in Bangladesh.

SHRI MUKHTIAR SINGH MALIK: Mr. Chairman, Sir, the influx of people of Indian origin from different countries and from all sides is becoming very acute and is posing very serious problems for the Government of India as all the people cannot be settled on this land. But the rate at which these people are coming into India gives the impression, I am afraid, that the day may not be far off when the whole of India may turn into a vast refugee camp. However, without stretching the point any further in this respect and not naming the different countries from where these people have been infiltrating, I would like to confine myself to the problems of the Chakma refugees who are more than 45,000 in number. Sir, the honourable Minister has said that they are Bangladeshi nationals and so,